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Ngbandi language

The **Ngbandi language** is a dialect continuum of the Ubangian family spoken by a half-million or so people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ngbandi proper) and in the Central African Republic (Yakoma and others). It is primarily spoken by the Ngbandi people, which included the dictator of what was then known as Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko.

Ngbandi	
Native to	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Region	Équateur Province
Ethnicity	Ngbandi, Yakoma
Native speakers	Unknown. Ca. 100,000 Southern Ngbandi (half the total population cited in 1989);[1] 370,000 Northern Ngbandi and other (1996–2000)[2]
Language family	Niger–Congo? ▪ Atlantic–Congo? ▪ Savanna? ▪ Ubangian ▪ **Ngbandi**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Variously: `ngb` – Northern Ngbandi `nbw` – Southern Ngbandi `yky` – Yakoma `deq` – Dendi `mgn` – Mbangi `gyg` – Gbayi
Glottolog	`ngba1290 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ngba1290)`[3]

Varieties

Northern Ngbandi is the lexical source of the trade language **Sango**, which has as many native speakers as Ngbandi and which is used as a second language by millions more in the CAR.

A variety of Ngbandi may have been spoken further east, in the DRC villages of Kazibati and Mongoba[4][5] near Uganda, until the late 20th century, but this is uncertain.

Yakoma, with a central position on the Ubangi River that divides the CAR from the DRC, has a high degree of intelligibility with all other varieties of Ngbandi, though as with any dialect continuum, it does not follow that more distant varieties are necessarily as intelligible with each other as they are with Yakoma.

Gbayi or **Kpatiri** is a divergent Ngbandic language. Gbayi had likely been adopted by people who had formerly spoken a Zande language. Nzakara, a Zande language, is spoken near Gbayi. Perhaps not coincidentally, Kpatili also happens to be the name of a spurious Zande language for which there is no linguistic data.[6]

References

1. Ngbandi at *Ethnologue (https://www.ethnologue.com/13/)* (13th ed., 1996).;
   ca. 250,000 would be expected from the population of Northern Ngbandi cited in 2000 (see next)
2. Northern Ngbandi (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/ngb/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
   Southern Ngbandi (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nbw/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
   Yakoma (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/yky/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
   Dendi (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/deq/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
   Mbangi (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/mgn/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
   Gbayi (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/gyg/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)

3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Ngbandi–Mongoba–Kazibati" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ngba1290). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Linguasphere code 93-ABB-ae/af
5. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Mongoba-Kazibati" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mong1345). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
6. Güldemann, Tom (2018). "Historical linguistics and genealogical language classification in Africa". In Güldemann, Tom (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of Africa*. The World of Linguistics series. **11**. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 58–444. doi:10.1515/9783110421668-002 (https://doi.org/10.1515%2F9783110421668-002). ISBN 978-3-11-042606-9.

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